

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 ACDA-19 MC-02 NEA-10 AF-10 SSO-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4042

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 26972

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TO TEXT NBRD PARA THREE)

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, XF, UN

SUBJ: FRENCH MIRAGES TO LIBYA

1. QUAI MIDDLE EAST DEPUTY DIRECTOR ROUILLON TOLD EMBOFF
OCT 16 THAT GOF CONTINUES TO BELEIVE THAT LIBYA
IS ABIDING BY THE TERMS UNDER WHICH IT BOUGHT FRENCH
MIRAGES. HE CLAIMED THAT ISRAELIS HAVE DROPPED THEIR
ORIGINAL CHAGE OF HAVING SHOT DOWN TWO LIBYAN MIRAGES
IN SINAI AREA, AND THAT GOI HAS INDICATED TO GOF
THAT IT WILL NOT REPEAT THESE CHARGES. ROUILLON
CONSIDERS FROM THIS THAT GOI HAS NO PROOF
MIRAGE PARTICIPATION IN SINAI FIGHTING AND THAT
ORIGINAL CHARGE WAS MISTAKE.

2. ROUILLON ADMITTED THAT SOME IN GOF HAD BELEIVED
ISRAEILI CHARGE WAS CORRECT. QUAI HAD, IN ANY CASE,
TAKEN IT SERIOUSLY AND HAD THEREFORE MADE OFFICIAL
GOVERNMENTAL DEMARCHE TO GOL TO EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE
PARIS ATTACHES TO THIS MATTER AND NEED FOR FULLY
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AUTHORITIVE REPLY. REPLY WAS INDEED AUTHORITIVE

AND CATEGORICAL, ROUILLON SAID. HE INDICATED THAT GOF CONSIDERS THIS INCIDENT CLOSED.

3. ROUILLON SAID CLAUSE IN MIRAGE SALES CONTRACT WITH LIBYA WOULD PROHIBIT A) TRANSFER OF MIRAGES TO GOVERNMENT OF "BATTLEFRON" STATE, B) STATIONING (AS DISTINCT FROM TEMPORARY VISIT) OF MIRAGES IN AIRFIELDS OF "BATTLEFRONT" STATES AND C) MIRAGES PARTICIPATING IN MILITARY ACTION OTHER THAN "LEGITIMATE DEFENSE", EVEN WITH LIBYAN PILOTS AND UNDER LIBYAN COLORS. ROUILLON SAID GOF HAS NOT DECIDED HOW IT WOULD ACT IF LIBYA WERE TO RENEGE ON THESE UNDERTAKINGS. FRANCE HAS WIDE MARGIN FOR INTERPRETATION, AS INDICATED BY "LEGITIMATE DEFENSE" PHRASE WHICH MIGHT BE USED TO COVER LIBYAN MILITARY ENGAGEMENT WITH ISRAELI FORCES ON ASSUMPTION ISRAELIS THREATENED OR USED FORCE AGAINST LIBYA, ACCORDING ROUILLON.

4. ROUILLON RECONFIRMED POINTS HE HAD MADE PER PARIS 26746 CONCERNING NARROW DEFINITION OF "BATTLEFRONT" STATES. HE SAID ONLY ISRAEL, SYRIA, JORDAN AND EGYPT ARE INCLUDED IN THIS CATEGORY. ON THIS BASIS FACT THAT IRAQ HAS NOW OPENLY JOINED IN WAR AND SAUDIS HAVE DESPATCHED TROOPS WILL NOT PREVENT FRANCE FROM SHIPPING ARMS TO THEM, ROUILLON SAID.

5. COMMENT: POSITIONS EXPRESSED BY ROUILLON ARE AUTHORITY AS OF NOW BUT OBVIOUSLY SUBJECT TO CHANGE SINCE THEY WERE TAKEN UNILATERALLY BY GOF UNDER PREVIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES. ROUILLON INDICATED FOREIGN MINISTER JOBERT IS DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH THESE MATTERS AS HE PREPARES FOR PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE OCTOBER 17. ROUILLON IMPLICITLY ADMITTED THAT GOF ARMS POLICY CONTAINS SOME ILLOGICAL ELEMENTS, WHICH MIGHT SIGNAL POSSIBLE POLICY CHANGES.

GDS
IRWIN

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